

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held at the COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD
SAFFRON WALDEN on 3 OCTOBER 2007 at 7.30 pm.**

Present: - Councillor A Dean – Chairman.
Councillors S Anjum, R P Chambers, R M Lemon, D Sadler, G Sell,
S Schneider, A Wattebot, L Wells and A Yarwood.

Also present:- C A Cant, C M Dean, M Gayler, E Godwin, S Howell, J I
Loughlin and D J Morson ,

Officers Present: - A Bovaird, M Cox, R Harborough, J Mitchell and T Turner. .

SC11 WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed members of the public to the meeting and explained the purpose of the Scrutiny Committee.

SC12 PUBLIC SPEAKING

Prior to the meeting statements were made by the following members of public.
M Nicholson, Julia Smith, Martin Herbert, Mr Segar, S Pimblett, P Johnson and R
Woodcock. A summary of the statements is attached to these minutes.

SC13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

An apology for absence was received from Councillor D Jones.

Councillors S Anjum, C Cant, A Dean, C Dean, E Godwin, S Howell and A
Wattebot declared prejudicial interests in item 4 on the agenda as they were
members of the Environment Committee and were at the meeting when the
decision, subject to the call-in was made

**SC14 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK – CORE STRATEGY POLICY
CHOICES AND OPTIONS FOR GROWTH – CALL IN OF DECISION**

*Having declared his interest in this item, the Chairman vacated the chair for the
consideration of this item. The Vice Chairman, Councillor Sell took the Chair.*

Councillor S Anjum left the meeting for the consideration of this item.
Councillors A Dean, S Wattebot, C Dean, E J Godwin and S Howell having
declared a prejudicial interest in this item, made a statement and left the room for
the discussion and voting on this item. A copy of the statements is attached to the
minutes.

The decision at Minute E18 of the meeting of the Environment Committee on 4 September had been called in at the request of Councillors R M Lemon, J I Loughlin, D J Morson and P A Wilcock. Councillor Morson's stated reasons for the call-in were "on the grounds that, the process was inadequate for a considered decision to be made". Councillor Wilcock's stated reasons were that "I consider that the decision is premature to offer detailed options including one not even considered by officers before the meeting, to go public consultation, without further preparation and detailed research on the impacts both negative and positive of the options put forward to provide sustainable solutions. The decision on Option 4 is against council policy in that it relies on the second runway and the infrastructure proposals which are against council policy". I would like this decision referred to full council for its consideration". Councillor Loughlin's reasons were that the procedure leading to the decision was not adequate for a properly considered recommendation.

Councillor Morson spoke to the call-in. He said that the process leading to the development had been inadequate for the decision to be made. The decision as to where to accommodate 4000 extra houses, apart from the possible second runway, was the second most important issue facing the district. In contrast to the recent airport application, the preparation had been nowhere near as robust. The verbal inclusion of option 4 at the Environment Committee had not been on the agenda and had had no supporting documentation. This was inadequate for such a monumental decision for the residents. At the south west panel the previous evening the questions about the infrastructure for the proposed new settlement could not be answered. He understood that this option had been discussed at the Conservative group meeting in August, but he had not been advised about the fourth option until half an hour before the meeting and this had not been shared with the wider community. He had asked for a workshop in August to discuss this issue. He said the decision had been clouded with the mention of a new sustainable community. He also questioned whether the developer's intention for the site would contravene Council policy. He then read the South West Area Panel decision from the previous evening

"The South West Area Panel notes the public disquiet surrounding the announcement of the Council's Options for Growth strategy and its own dissatisfaction with the extent of information available during public engagement through the panel at previous meetings. It therefore welcomes the decision to call this in to the Scrutiny Committee and urges the Council to think again. The Panel believes that no specific locations should be named for the houses at this stage, until further research by the Council's officers is available, carefully evaluated and communicated to members and the residents of Uttlesford."

He concluded that there had been an inadequate form of consultation and asked that the decision be referred back to the Environment Committee for reconsideration.

Councillor Ketteridge replied on behalf of the Chairman of Environment Committee. He said that he had made a full statement for his reasons for call-in at the meeting of the Area Panel. However he explained that the district was

short of amenity and infrastructure and if it wanted to achieve schools, open spaces and road infrastructure, this would not be achieved through smaller developments. This had been shown by the recent developments at Takeley and Dunmow. The Council had no choice but to prepare this plan and he considered that a large settlement would be the best option. However, he had listened to the views of the public at both meetings and as a result would be prepared to put a motion to Full Council that would ensure that all options were considered equally. He had been advised by officers that the Council must have a preferred option so he would propose that all 4 options would be the Council's preferred options for the purpose of consultation.

The Director of Development then explained the process of preparing the Core Strategy for the district and progress with policy choices and options for growth. He said that the strategy was a broad vision for growth up to 2024 and was not site specific, although growth options would have to be feasible. He outlined the detailed consultation that had already taken place which had led to the options presented to the Environment Committee. The next step would be a 6 week public consultation exercise on the Council's preferred options. There would then be further Council decisions and a period of consultation before the plan was submitted to the Secretary of state with a possible public examination in 2008. He stressed that site specific decisions were not being made at this time and the decision made at the Environment Committee was part of an ongoing consultation exercise.

It was then moved by Councillor Yarwood and seconded by Councillor Lemon that "the decision be referred to Full Council"

Councillor Gayler said that the Council did not have sufficient evidence to support any of the options. It did not know future infrastructure requirements and how they could be achieved for the developments. The Council needed to focus on where people were coming from and where they wanted to live instead of following developer led proposals for sites in the district. He considered that affordable housing was required throughout the district.

Councillor Lemon said that he was an Independent member and had supported the call-in because he thought that the decision at the Environment Committee had been taken in haste, badly thought through and with little discussion. He was had not been aware of the possibility of a fourth option until after the Environment Committee meeting had taken place. He though it was a sensible option to put forward all four options for public consultation and to allow more detailed examination of all the options to take place.

Councillor Yarwood thanked all the members of the public for attending the meeting. He agreed with the previous speakers that the fourth option had been brought to the committee at the last minute and there had not been enough evidence available at that time to make a conclusion either way. At the Environment Committee, Councillor Godwin had proposed an amendment to option 4 which would support a new settlement but not to specify where it would

be. He thought this was the course of action that the Council should be taking at this stage.

He requested that a recorded vote be taken on this item.

Councillor Chambers said that there was no joy in looking at any proposals for housing that was not wanted, but prescribed by the Government. There was very little choice for growth areas in the District and Councillors were elected to make difficult decisions. He said that no decision would be taken in haste and if all four options were put forward as preferred options it would allow for further consultation and consideration.

Councillor Ketteridge asked that the decision should not be called in to Council but he would put it as a motion to its next meeting. Councillor Morson did not accept this. He asked that the Committee go along with his reasons for calling- in this decision. It was premature to put forward a possible development at Henham and Elsenham and he wanted specific reference to this site to be omitted from the options.

The motion "that the decision of the Environment Committee on 4 September (minute E18) be referred to full Council" was put to the vote and was lost by 4 votes to 3.

The voting was as follows

For the motion: Councillors R Lemon, G Sell, A Yarwood.

Against the motion; R Chambers, D Sadler, S Schneider, L Wells.

The meeting was adjourned for 10 minutes.

The Chairman returned to the meeting and resumed the Chair for the remainder of the meeting

SC15 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2007 and of the Extraordinary meeting held on 19 September 2007 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

SC16 **WICKEN HOUSE**

The Chairman and Councillor Lemon had studied the transcript of the extraordinary meeting and had identified two principle matters that should form the basis of the questions to the County Council. These were; the degree of

consultation carried out and how the facilities that Wicken House provided would be replicated at the other centres in the county.
A response would be prepared for submission to the County Council.

SC17 REVIEW OF LEBANENSE EVACUATION

The Committee received a document that had been put together by the Scrutiny Committee Task Group as a result of the Lebanese Evacuation in July/August 2006 and was designed to be used as guidance in the event of a similar situation occurring in the future.

RESOLVED that the document be forwarded to the Community Committee to be included in the Council's emergency plans.

SC18 DECISIONS LISTS

Members noted the decisions lists from the Environment, Operations and Community Committees.

SC19 SCRUTINY REVIEW UPDATE

In relation to the review of public conveniences it was hoped that a meeting would be held shortly. The planning officers had been occupied with the Stansted Inquiry but it was hoped that some progress would soon be made with Highways Communications.

The meeting ended at 10.00 pm